

New York's Archivists, Librarians, and Records Managers Respond to the World Trade Center Tragedy

New York's community of archivists, librarians, and records managers wish to express their deepest sympathies to the individuals, families, and communities that have suffered and endured so much as a result of the September 11th World Trade Center tragedy.

In an effort to provide assistance during this period of recovery and rebuilding, a group of archives, library, and records management organizations are undertaking collaborative initiatives to address both the need for immediate disaster assessment and recovery and the longer-term need to document the people, organizations and activities surrounding the Trade Center attack, response and recovery in New York. These efforts have just begun, and both the activities and organizations involved are expected to grow and change in the coming months. In addition, the group will seek to work in cooperation with other regional, state and national initiatives concerned with related issues.

The group, as of this date, includes: the New York State Archives and the National Archives—Northeast Region (serving as co-coordinators); the Archivists Roundtable of Metropolitan New York; New York University's Program in Archival Management and Historical Editing; Columbia University, New-York Historical Society; the New York City Department of Records and Information Services; the Association of Records Managers and Administrators—New York City; and the METRO Library Agency.

Specifically, the group has initiated the following actions:

Disaster assessment and recovery: Efforts are underway to identify organizations holding archival, library and records materials in the area below 14th street, to determine whether damage may have occurred in their collections, and to provide advice on both techniques and resources for undertaking assessment and recovery. To support this effort, a website has been established by the State Archives at: www.nyshrab.org/WTC/wtc.html Members of the group will be seeking information and will update the website regularly. If you have information to provide on the status of repositories or questions, please contact us at: dhs@mail.nysed.gov (or by telephone at 518.474.6926).

Documentation of the WTC disaster: Efforts are underway to develop a Documentation Task Force that will serve as a clearinghouse of information on documentation efforts being undertaken by repositories in New York City and around the state. In addition, the group intends to develop a framework plan to identify the most critical issues, people, and organizations to document in order to ensure a full historical record of this event survives. Individual and collaborative projects will be encouraged to address priority areas and topics. Assessing existing documentation will help us to determine preservation and cataloging needs for the future. If you are undertaking a documentation project, or are interested in this effort, please visit our website at: www.nyshrab.org/WTC/document.html or contact us at: dhs@mail.nysed.gov (or by telephone at 518.474.6926).

The organizations and individuals committed to this endeavor seek to ensure the survival of New York's documentary heritage, and to provide a full record of the many aspects of the World Trade Center tragedy. We encourage collaboration, and invite you to join us in our efforts.